

Author: Martina Northrup-Lyons

Co Author: Dallas Genereaux (University of British Columbia), Josephine Kayumba, Youssouf Koita (UNICEF Rwanda), Alexis Mucumbitsi (Ministry of Health, Rwanda), Judy Mclean (University of British Columbia)

Topic: The first 1000 days, infant feeding, and early childhood development

Title: Acceptability of home fortification with micronutrient powders following an 18-month scale-up in Rwanda

Presentation Type: Poster

To evaluate the acceptability of Home Fortification with micronutrient powders (MNP/Ongera) among caregivers in Rwanda as a means for improving the quality of their child's diet.

A random sample of 186 mothers from 38 randomly selected villages in the 19 districts currently implementing the Ongera Home Fortification program were interviewed about acceptability, utilization and adherence as part of a program review.

Overall, 95% of mothers were satisfied with Ongera, and would recommend it to other mothers. Of 160 mothers who perceived their child's health to have changed since beginning Ongera, 153 (96%) stated that overall health had improved. Rumours about Ongera were a primary concern; a total of 57/185 mothers (31%) claimed they had heard negative rumours. The most common rumor was that Ongera gives children diarrhoea. However, of all those who heard rumours, only 1 mother stated it had negatively affected her decision to give her child Ongera. Proper utilization of Ongera is an additional acceptability concern. A total of 45 mothers (24%) reported changes in the taste, smell, or colour of food after mixing food with Ongera, of which 15 (33%) stated their child refused to eat the food as a result of the change.

Mothers are motivated to participate in the Ongera program. However, future trainings of mothers should feature WASH messages more prominently to dispel inaccurate rumors linking MNP to diarrhea. Additionally, these trainings should make mothers aware that if Ongera is mixed improperly, the taste, smell, or colour of the food may change.

